

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of including a jackpot component in a primary wagering game played
 5 by at least one player, comprising the steps of:
 - a. requiring each player to place a wager on the primary wagering game;
 - b. conducting a round of the primary wagering game with the players;
 - c. designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of
 indicia resulting from completion of the round; and
 10 d. providing an opportunity for each winner to win a prize that is randomly chosen
 from a group of prizes that includes an incrementing jackpot.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the incrementing jackpot is a progressive jackpot
 based on a percentage of a total amount of the wagers placed.
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3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the incrementing jackpot is a time-based jackpot
 which increments a predetermined amount at predetermined time intervals.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the incrementing jackpot increments within a
 20 predetermined range of amounts from a minimum to a maximum jackpot.
5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the incrementing jackpot remains at the
 maximum jackpot upon so reaching until the incrementing jackpot is won by a player.

6. The method of Claim 4, wherein the incrementing jackpot returns to the *minimum* jackpot after reaching the maximum jackpot and continues incrementing in a continuously upwardly scrolling manner until the jackpot is won by a player.

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7. The method of Claim 4, wherein the minimum and maximum jackpots are calculated by first calculating an amount for a fixed jackpot, then creating a range around the fixed jackpot defined by the minimum and maximum jackpots which satisfies a predetermined payback percentage, the average of values within the range being substantially equal to the fixed jackpot.

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8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the setting of the minimum and maximum jackpots includes determining how often and by what amount the incrementing jackpot increments.

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9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is conducted with players at a plurality of individual primary gaming devices which are electronically linked together to a common jackpot display showing the current amount of the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot on the common jackpot display being visible to the players at the gaming devices, and configured such that when a player from any of the game stations wins the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot can be stopped from incrementing at the respective gaming device.

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10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of providing an opportunity for the winner to win a prize which is randomly selected utilizes a device chosen from the set consisting of a rotatable segmented prize wheel, an alternately lighting display case, a plurality of boxes, and an animated character racing device.

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11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the incrementing jackpot is shown on a display that can be stopped from incrementing upon winning of the incrementing jackpot.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of providing an opportunity for the winner to win a prize that is randomly selected utilizes a device chosen from the set consisting of a rotatable, segmented prize wheel, an alternately lighting display case, a plurality of boxes, and an animated character racing device.

13. The method of Claim 1, wherein the primary wagering game comprises a card game, and wherein the step of designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of indicia upon completion of the round utilizes indicia displayed on one or more cards dealt to the respective players as a result of the step of playing a round of the card game.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the card game is blackjack.

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15. The method of Claim 13, conducted in a live form on a card table with a human dealer and using one or more decks of conventional playing cards.

16. The method of Claim 13, conducted in virtual form on video screen using one or more decks of virtual playing cards.

17. The method of Claim 13, wherein the method is conducted with players at a plurality of individual card tables which card tables are electronically linked together to a common jackpot display showing the current amount of the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot on the common jackpot display being visible to the players at the card tables, and configured such that when a player from any of the card tables wins the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot can be stopped from incrementing at the respective card table.

18. The method of Claim 1, wherein the primary casino game comprises slots, and wherein the step of designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of indicia upon completion of the round utilizes the indicia displayed on one or more reels of a slot machine as a result of the step of playing a round of slots.

19. The method of Claim 18, conducted using an electro-mechanical slot machine having generally cylindrical reels that are rotatable.

20. The method of Claim 18, conducted in virtual form on a video screen using a virtual slot machine having a plurality of virtual reels.

21. The method of Claim 18, wherein the method is conducted with players at a plurality of individual slot machines which slot machines are electronically linked together to a

common jackpot display showing the current amount of the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot on the common jackpot display being visible to the players at the individual slot machines, and configured such that when a player from any of the slot machines wins the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot can be stopped from incrementing at the
 5 respective slot machine.

22. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:

- a. requiring each player wishing to participate in the jackpot component to place a side wager separate and distinct from the wager on the primary wagering game; and
- 10 b. wherein the step of designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of indicia upon completion of the round comprises selecting only from those players whom placed a side wager.

23. The method of Claim 22, wherein the method is conducted with players at a
 15 plurality of individual gaming devices that are electronically linked together to a common jackpot display showing the current amount of the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot on the common jackpot display being visible to the players at the gaming devices, and configured such that when a player from any of the gaming devices wins the incrementing jackpot, the incrementing jackpot can be stopped from incrementing at the respective gaming device.

20 24. The method of Claim 22, wherein the primary wagering game comprises a card game, and wherein the step of designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of indicia upon completion of the round utilizes indicia displayed on one or more

playing cards dealt to the respective players as a result of the step of playing a round of the card game.

25. The method of Claim 24, wherein the step of providing an opportunity for each
 5 winner to win a prize which is randomly selected from a group of prizes which includes an incrementing jackpot comprises providing each winner an opportunity to activate a jackpot button which causes a segmented prize wheel to spin and randomly stop on one of a plurality of segments indicating a prize won.

10 26. The method of Claim 25, wherein the prize wheel includes five fixed jackpots and one incrementing jackpot.

27. The method of Claim 22, wherein the primary casino game comprises slots, and wherein the step of designating as a winner each player having a predetermined arrangement of
 15 indicia upon completion of the round utilizes the indicia displayed on one or more reels of a slot machine as a result of the step of playing a round of slots.

28. A random incrementing jackpot device, comprising:
 a. a random prize-generating device for randomly choosing a prize from a
 20 plurality of possible prizes, one of the prizes being an incrementing jackpot;
 b. an incrementing device which increments the amount of the incrementing
 jackpot from a minimum jackpot to a maximum jackpot; and

c. wherein said incrementing device is stoppable upon said random prize generating device choosing the incrementing jackpot.

29. The jackpot device of Claim 28, wherein the incrementing device is
5 programmable to set the minimum and maximum jackpots.

30. The jackpot device of Claim 29, wherein the incrementing of the jackpot is
progressive being based on increasing a predetermined percentage of a total amount of the
wagers placed.

31. The jackpot device of Claim 29, wherein the incrementing of the jackpot is time-
based which increments the jackpot a predetermined amount at predetermined time intervals.

32. The jackpot device of Claim 28, wherein the random prize generating device is
15 operatively connected to the incrementing device to automatically stop the incrementing when
the incrementing jackpot is chosen by said random prize generating device.

33. The jackpot device of Claim 28, wherein the incrementing device includes a
switch device that is hand-operable to manually stop the incrementing of the jackpot after the
20 incrementing jackpot is chosen by the random prize-generating device.

34. The jackpot device of Claim 28, wherein the random jackpot-generating device
comprises a rotatable, segmented prize wheel.

35. The jackpot device of Claim 34, wherein the incrementing device includes a jackpot button, and an electric motor operatively connected to the segmented prize wheel, said jackpot button being hand-operable to cause said segmented prize wheel to spin by means of said electric motor and randomly stop on one of a plurality of segments of the prize wheel indicating a prize is won.

36. The jackpot device of Claim 28, further comprising a jackpot display operatively connected to the incrementing device for displaying the amount of the incrementing jackpot.

37. The jackpot device of Claim 36, wherein the incrementing device is adapted to be connected to a plurality of random prize-generating devices such that the incrementing of the jackpot on the jackpot display stops when the incrementing jackpot is chosen by any of said random prize generating devices.

38. A game device which includes a random incrementing jackpot, comprising:

a. a primary gaming device; and

b. a random incrementing jackpot device operatively connected to said primary casino gaming device, having a random prize generating device for randomly choosing a prize from a plurality of possible prizes with one of the prizes being an incrementing jackpot, an incrementing device which increments the amount of the incrementing jackpot from a minimum jackpot to a maximum jackpot, and a switch device which permits stopping the incrementing of

said incrementing device when the incrementing jackpot is chosen by said random prize generating device.

39. The game device of Claim 38, wherein the primary gaming device comprises a gaming table for playing card games.

40. The game device of Claim 39, wherein the random jackpot-generating device comprises a rotatable, segmented prize wheel.

41. The game device of Claim 40, wherein the incrementing device includes a jackpot button, and an electric motor operatively connected to the segmented prize wheel, said jackpot button being hand-operable to cause said segmented prize wheel to spin by means of said electric motor and randomly stop on one of a plurality of segments of the prize wheel indicating a prize won.

42. The game device of Claim 41, wherein the prize wheel is built into the gaming table.

43. The game device of Claim 39, further comprising a jackpot display operatively connected to the incrementing device for displaying the amount of the incrementing jackpot.

44. The game device of Claim 43, wherein the incrementing device is adapted to be connected to a plurality of random prize generating devices such that the incrementing of the

jackpot on the jackpot display stops when the incrementing jackpot is chosen by any of said random prize generating devices.

45. The game device of Claim 38, wherein the primary game device comprises a slot machine.

46. The game device of Claim 45, wherein the slot machine is an electro-mechanical slot machine having generally cylindrical reels that are rotatable.

47. The gaming device of Claim 45, wherein the slot machine is a video gaming device having a plurality of virtual reels and shown on a video screen.

48. The game device of Claim 45, further comprising a jackpot display operatively connected to the incrementing device for displaying the amount of the incrementing jackpot.

49. The game device of Claim 48, wherein the gaming device being adapted to connect to a plurality of gaming devices with the incrementing device adapted to be connected to a plurality of random prize generating devices at said gaming devices such that the incrementing of the jackpot on the jackpot display stops when the incrementing jackpot is chosen by any of said random prize generating devices.

50. The game device of Claim 45, wherein the prize wheel, the jackpot display, and the micro-controller are built into the gaming table.